

ecular Thought.

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*A Fortnightly Journal of Rational Criticism
In Politics, Science, and Religion.*

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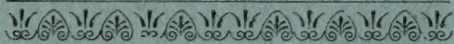
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NEW SERIES.

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THE POWER OF WEALTH.

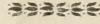
*'Tis gold
Which buys admittance; oft it doth; yea, and makes
Diana's rangers, false themselves, yield up
Their deer to the stand of the stealer; and 'tis gold
Which makes the true man kill'd, and saves the thief;
Nay, sometimes, hangs both thief and true man: what
Can it not do, and undo? —SHAKESPEARE, Cymbeline.*

EDITORIALS.

THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS IN TORONTO.

THAT Toronto the Good and Pious should be the field of wholesale bribery and corruption among the officials employed in its civic elections will surprise few who have watched the proceedings of its City Council for many years past. The passing of the Street Railway contract by purchased aldermanic votes is only one instance of many that have occurred which show that, as in St. Louis, Chicago, and New York, though clerical influence may be strong in favor of gaining exemption from taxation and other financial advantages, it has but an infinitesimal effect in the direction of producing an honest public sentiment. A feature that shows most prominently is the struggle among the members of the Board of Education, as well as those of the City Council, for positions of influence which may possibly be used for mercenary purposes; and such a use seems the only explanation of the struggle made for them by men otherwise entirely unfitted for them. It is a depressing circumstance that the first few meetings of the Board of Education have been largely taken up with wrangles and struggles of the nature we have indicated; but there is time for improvement, and as one-half of the Board will remain in office for two years, it seems probable that, under the able leadership of Inspector

Hughes, our Public School system will ere long be placed upon a far more rational and effective basis than it has hitherto rested upon. The judicial inquiries now going on will no doubt result in putting an end to the "ward" system, which lends itself so easily to the schemes of the illiterate and corrupt ward politicians.



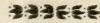
THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR.

Another great struggle between two great Powers has just commenced, as if to show the futility of all the schemes of amateur peace-mongers. War's horrors are certainly grim enough to encourage every peace-lover to make all possible sacrifices to avert them; but it is plain that, in dealing with a constantly aggressive Power like Russia, a suggestion of arbitration by such a Power as Japan under present circumstances would be the height of folly. Russia, in fact, is violating her solemn pledges, not only to China, but to all the other Powers, and Japan seems to have but one remedy, unless she is prepared to submit, like China, to Russian dictation. In our view, the war just commenced in the Far East will be one of the most momentous in the history of the world, even if it should not extend beyond the two Powers that have entered into it. Between these two Powers there are some striking differences. Russia is an old nation, which from being a small inland State less than four centuries ago, has gradually extended its boundaries until to-day it has become the greatest and most powerful consolidated empire in the world. Smaller in population than either China or the British Empire, Russia as a military power is greater than any other single nation, its people belonging almost entirely to vigorous races of the temperate zone, and its 140,000,000 of people not only maintaining an enormous standing army, but being able to put into the field for aggressive warfare—if transport, etc., were available—a far larger force than could be sent out by any other nation. But there is another side to the picture. Though, as new additions have been made to its territory from time to time, the newly-added populations seem easily to take to the process of Russianization, there can be little question that the despotic and ultra-repressive system of government, and the practical serfdom of the masses of the people to both clergy and aristocracy, under which the bulk of them have been reduced to the direst poverty and degradation, has produced many movements of a revolutionary character. A revolution and civil war are contingencies not improbable in the near future; and it is safe to say that the large standing army is absolutely necessary for the protection of the ruling classes; and this, though the common people regard the Czar as the sacred representative of deity and the priests as their rightful tax-

masters. Russian diplomatists, many of them of foreign extraction, have for generations been celebrated for their astuteness and skill, and have no doubt gained many victories over the rulers of the states which have been absorbed, as well as over the representatives of the other great powers; but Japan has apparently learnt the lesson, and has refused to be longer played with. But the whole system of government in Russia appears to be so honeycombed with corruption, nepotism, and caste, and police and military restrictions are so universal and harsh, that official reports are as unreliable as those of Turkish officials. Under such conditions, it may be well within the mark to say that the spread of Russian power is a menace to the progress of civilization.

On the other hand, Japan half a century ago was an almost unknown land. For more than two centuries its ports had been closed to the Western ruffians who had abused its hospitality; but its people were living under a feudal system with a dual monarchy the constant strifes of which prevented all progress. At that time, it was said that the Japanese language had no synonym for "liberty," nor had the Japanese people any corresponding idea. Though an extremely ancient monarchy, its political and religious systems had combined to make it almost as stationary as China. But when at length the country was opened to Western commerce and Western ideas, and its dual monarchy was replaced by a better system, the intellectual brightness and vigor of the Japanese people asserted themselves. Under its present enlightened rulers, a new nation is being evolved. Instead of saying, as most Westerners have said, "My grandmother's religion and my grandfather's politics are good enough for me," the Japanese sent their messengers all over the world to find out what other peoples were doing, and to note everything of value in the way of manners and customs, arts and sciences, philosophy and industries that they observed. Quaint notes and queries made by these travellers were often ridiculed by Western wiseacres, but their purpose was served, and not only has every material improvement been introduced into the country that could possibly be used to aid its progress, but representative government and a complete system of national education have been introduced. It may be said with truth, we think, that in forty years Japan has made more progress than has been made in England itself in four centuries. Nearly every branch of industrial enterprise has been successfully introduced, until at the present time the Japanese people are nearer to being completely self-sustaining than any other large nation. It is not too much to say, perhaps, that Japanese diplomatists are at least as honest, and skilful, and courteous as the best men in the British or any other service, and that the progress made by the people of Japan show that their representatives only reflect the national character-

istics. Looking at the condition of affairs in the Far East, especially in the gigantic, if disorganized and feeble, empire of China, and the attempts of the Western Powers to dismember it, one cannot but look upon Japan as the star of hope for the Orient. Under her guidance, the industrious and pacific populations of Eastern Asia might make a start on the new road to freedom, and could soon reach a point where they would cease to be a prey to Western vultures. If they are dominated by Russia, what progress they have so far made would be at once wiped out. In this view, the success of Japan means the advance of civilization; and, though war in any form is a nightmare that all lovers of humanity would willingly see the end of, unfortunately for mankind the day of universal peace seems even yet a long way off, talk arbitration as we will.



IN THE "LAND OF LIBERTY!"

A few weeks ago we referred to the case of John Turner, the trade unionist advocate, who was arrested at a trade union meeting in New York on a charge of being an "anarchist," and whose case now awaits decision by the Supreme Court; and also to that of the *Lucifer*, in which the autocrats of Uncle Sam's Post-office declared the paper too obscene to be allowed to pass through the mails at newspaper rates, but offered to carry it if the publisher would pay full postage rates! A more outrageous misconception of justice and the duty of officials of a democratic Government than is displayed in these cases it would be difficult to imagine. Other journals, however, have been attacked; and the conclusion seems inevitable that a determined effort is being made in the interests of the orthodox and monopolistic classes in the States to put down all journals of a pronouncedly heterodox tendency, whether in religion or politics. The latest attack on Freethought journals has been made on the New York *Truth Seeker*, and the ground of the attack seems as absurd as it is inconsistent and unjustifiable. As our readers know, that journal has been proscribed in Canada ever since the days when Sir A. Caron, the Postmaster-General of the late Conservative Dominion Government, stopped its transmission through the Canadian mails. His edict, however, was but partially carried out, so that many persons received their copies regularly, while others were unable to obtain a single copy. It seemed to be left to the local postmaster to enforce the edict or not at his pleasure. It might be thought that, when the new Government under Sir Wilfrid Laurier came into office, being supposedly "Liberal" in politics and not so much under Roman Catholic tutelage as its predecessor, there would have been some chance of the proscription being removed. Such hopes, however, were groundless. Sir Wm.

Mulock proved obdurate to all appeals, and never, indeed, vouchsafed either an answer or an explanation of his reasons for maintaining the edict of his predecessor. All the reply ever received was a stereotyped letter from the Post-office, signed "W. D. LeSueur," acknowledging the appeal, and stating that there was no appeal from the Postmaster's decision. A few weeks ago, however, the publishers of the *Truth Seeker* found that several weeks' copies of their journal addressed to Canada had been retained in the New York Post-office instead of being forwarded as usual, and inquiry elicited the statement that this had been done because the Canadian authorities had declared the paper to be undeliverable in Canada, and thus it was a "prohibited article," and would not be forwarded. Like the Canadian, the United States Postmaster-General has autocratic power in this matter. Whether he will act as an impartial and unbiassed official remains to be seen; but it is remarkable, to say the least, that a Canadian edict, nine years old, and never efficiently enforced though unrescinded, should be suddenly raked up by the officials of a foreign country in order to oppress its own citizens. America a Land of Liberty! Not by a long way. It is being Russianized and Romanized almost as fast as is Canada; and, if our prognostications are not far out, many years will not elapse before its citizens will have to look to Japan and even Spain for lessons of liberty and self-government.



GOLDWIN SMITH ON FREEDOM OF OPINION.

At the time Sir A. Caron's edict was issued, Goldwin Smith was appealed to for his opinion on the matter, and it may be interesting to reproduce his reply here:

"The Grange, Toronto, Sept. 30th.

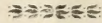
"Dear Sir,—You may be sure that you will always find me on the side of perfect freedom of opinion. Beliefs which cannot maintain themselves by arguments in fair lists against all comers ought not to be maintained at all. In the number of the *Truth Seeker* which you have sent me there is much to which believers in Christianity will object, as they would to many of the utterances of my late friends, Professors Huxley and Tyndall. But there is nothing, so far as I can see, to justify or excuse the exclusion of your journal from circulation. Yours faithfully,

"E. M. Macdonald, New York."

"GOLDWIN SMITH."

As we have before suggested, there are one or two points on which a clear opinion ought to be formed and kept constantly in view. We are strongly of opinion that the Post-office Department should not undertake to carry mail matter of any sort at a loss, but should charge all newspapers and magazines a certain rate to cover cost, and make no distinction in favor of any class of journals. This would be fair to all, and save a vast amount of vexatious regu-

lations. All that would be needed would be a proper registration. We are not opposed *à outrance* to the prohibitory power of the Postmaster-General. Under present conditions, it is almost a necessary power, but its exercise is a matter that demands clear definition. In our day, and in an empire comprising large populations having the most divergent religious opinions, a charge of blasphemy is a monstrous anachronism that grown men should be ashamed of. But there is, unfortunately, a class of people who would use the mails for obscene publications, and, though we should like to see entire freedom of opinion, we are afraid it is not yet practicable. What we do say, however, is that no journal should be suppressed unless the Postal officials institute and carry to successful issue a criminal charge against the publisher for issuing obscene, immoral, gambling, or fraudulent literature.



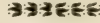
GOLDWIN SMITH AS "DEFENDER OF THE FAITH."

In another page we reprint from the New York *Sun* the latest contribution by Dr. Goldwin Smith to the discussion of the religio-ethical problem. In many ways, Dr. Smith's letter is a remarkable one, though it is impossible to controvert the remark of the editor of the *Sun*, that, with all his learning, Dr. Smith does no more to satisfactorily solve the problem he attacks than does the schoolboy who also writes on the subject. Our difficulty is to understand how it is that a man of the ability of Dr. Smith fails to see that if, as he has conceded time and again, the whole case for Agnosticism or Atheism is proved—that is, that "dogma," or the formulation of any definite statement of theological belief, is out-of-date for intelligent men—in reality no basis is left for authoritative ethics; and that, however it may be described, the true ethics which forms the working basis of civilized life, in our day as in the day of Epicurus or Epictetus, Chrysostom or Augustine, is nothing but the opinions of the most influential sections of society regarding those matters which are essential to the general well-being. It is all very well for men to say that conduct is controlled by beliefs. This is probably true. But the question is, What beliefs? When a pious burglar or a church-going forger is contemplating a robbery, he may possibly take some account of the priest's threat that "the wicked shall suffer eternal torment;" but it is patent to all men that his actions are controlled by the firm belief that if he can succeed in his fraud he will be substantially benefited, and that the great things to be feared are the discovery and exposure of his misdeeds and his punishment for them by his fellow-men called judges. It is certain that many thieves are by no means convinced that there is anything intrinsically wrong in their practices, for they justify themselves by the argument that "legitimate" in-

dustry and commerce partake largely of the nature of fraud, and that whole classes of society live parasitically in idleness upon the labor of the workers.

That men should still hanker after immortality is one of those facts for which we can only partially account when we remember that, even in the best schools of learning of to-day, a vast amount of metaphysical speculation still passes muster for knowledge. It seems clear that, in early life, some stereotyped expressions and cant phrases may have the effect of producing impressions corresponding to those received from real objects, and that no amount of subsequent learning—even if logically totally contradictory—can efface these impressions. No other way of accounting for the observed facts appears possible. In Dr. Smith's case, while he openly confesses that there is no rational ground for theological creeds—that, in fact, all gods are but manufactures of the human imagination—he still clings apparently to the belief that there must be some ethical authority above man—some “power outside man that makes for righteousness.” It is clear that, if there be some such power, it can only be what it is supposed to be by virtue of its conscious purpose and work, and that is only another way of getting back to the belief in a “god.” Our own firm faith is, that if an efficient basis for ethics cannot be found in man himself, in his constitution, his history, and his environment, no definite basis is possible. What seems equally clear is, that ethics, like every other department of human study, is progressive, and that, consequently, a definite and permanent authoritative basis for it is impossible. Taking a broad view of human life on this earth, looking upon it as a mere minor phase of the great cosmic process, in which the beginning was and the end must also be a mere brutal struggle for existence, we can regard only its middle phases as those to which any ethical system can apply. These phases—those in which the powers of nature are in the main favorable to human life, and in which cultivated human intelligence leads to a conscious effort to attain righteousness, so far as it may be attainable—appear to be the sole field for ethical culture. And what seems to us to be the most certain fact in the whole controversy is this, that, authoritative ethics based on theology having so far utterly failed, and the effort to find some new authority being only a harking back to the same impotent supernatural basis, the efforts of intelligent men should be directed to the study of nature, and especially of man, his powers and his aspirations, in order to find the best way in which to cultivate the former and satisfy the latter. In order to do what is right, man must be competent to judge what is just under the circumstances in which he lives at any particular time. “Knowledge is power,” we have been taught. We might with equal truth say that “Knowledge is goodness,” for it is the

only basis upon which goodness can be successfully built up. Christianity is said to have been sent for babes and sucklings, not for the learned; for the foolish, not for the wise. Goldwin Smith has accepted the privilege of writing himself down as one of the babes and sucklings. This may be a feather in his cap as a temporizer, but certainly not as a rationalist.



CANON GLAZEBROOK ON THE "SPIRITUAL DUTY" OF PARENTS.

Toronto has been favored with a visit from Canon Glazebrook, the master of Clifton College, England, and we hope the parents belonging to the congregation of St. James's Cathedral, who on January 10th listened to his sermon on the above subject, as well as others who read the long newspaper report of the sermon, will weigh his words well. Referring to the Jewish practice at the Passover celebration of causing a youth to ask his father, "What mean ye by this service?" in answer to which the father has to read an account of the Exodus, the Canon regretted that the discussion on school matters in England was likely to deprive the children there of nearly all religious instruction in the public schools. He fully believed that the two or three hours per week devoted to religion in the English higher schools was "quite insufficient preparation for boys to commence the struggle of life;" and he laid the responsibility for giving adequate religious instruction to the children upon the parents. The Canon hopelessly mixes up religion and morality, and if they were inseparable we might perhaps agree with him in both particulars. But let us look at what he understands by the term "religion:"

"Putting aside all subjects of party controversy, there were three main groups of conceptions which *children should be made to grasp*, namely, the Creed, the Bible, and the Church."

Of these three items, we are simply stating a fact when we say that the first is totally incomprehensible by either children or adults; the second is full of matters that are altogether unfit to be taught to children, even if they can be made to furnish lessons for adults; and the third involves questions of sectarianism that have led, and will continue to lead, to the bitterest strife. As to the Creed, Canon Glazebrook himself says:

"Nobody would maintain that children could completely understand the Christian creed. In the full sense of the word, *that was beyond the wisest of men*. But the fact remained, that man's conduct was chiefly determined by his beliefs."

It is perfectly true that the wisest of men can make nothing rational of such things as the Christian creed. The man who pretends to understand it is a lunatic or a faker. And if the wisest of men cannot understand it in the full sense, in what sense can they understand it? If, too, wise men can only par-

tially understand the Creed, how is it possible that children can grasp it? If Canon Glazebrook told the truth, he would admit that he knows neither wise men nor children can be made to grasp the meaning of the Creed, for it has no real meaning, but that they can be trained to repeat it as a stereotyped form of words and to pretend that they understand it and believe it. But it would seem, after all, that accurate knowledge of the meaning of the Creed is by no means essential to its usefulness:

“Imperfect, therefore, as these conceptions might be, it had a great deal to do with whether we stood upon a higher or a lower degree of the world’s great altars which led through darkness up to God.”

Stripped of its flourishes, this passage indicates that the Canon attaches little importance to a correct conception of one of the most important parts of the foundation of Christianity; but thinks that, if men—and children—only regard it as the correct thing according to the authority of the Church, they will be on the right turnpike that leads to the foot of a Jacob’s ladder, of which the bottom stands in the Church’s coffers and the top passes into a cloud of smoke, through which, as the Canon says, the believer, with the eye of faith, sees God, or fancies he does so. As with the ancient Hebrews, a cloud of smoke in full daylight is a reliable guide for Christians.

The Canon is equally strong in advocating the teaching of the Bible to the children. Many people, he said, had heard of Biblical criticism, but were contented with “a vague dislike of all criticism or an equally vague fear that their foundations were unsound.” We believe this ostrich-like attitude to be very common. Many men, indeed, openly say, “Right or wrong, my grandmother’s religion is good enough for me.” In trade and commerce, literature and art, industry and science, they demand the latest and best developments, but in religion they are satisfied with the old and foolish, the unbelievable, the irrational, and the incomprehensible. And there is, perhaps, for most men, some sound common sense in such a conclusion. When men like Canon Glazebrook, and other trained leaders, decry discussion and depict the awful results of unbelief, and pretend that, though indefinite to the last degree, the Church’s creeds are so indisputably true that they must be accepted as the very foundation of morality, the untrained masses may be excused for believing their hereditary leaders—or misleaders—and for accepting a position that saves them from the worry of doubt and inquiry, even though it involves the acceptance of a book full of the most cruel and immoral stories as the best book in the world for teaching morality. Canon Glazebrook says he thinks children should be taught to regard the Bible, not as a mere collection of striking incidents, etc., but as “a progressive revelation,” in which “Jehovah, whom the Jews once merely recognized as a magnified man, had stood

revealed as the High and Holy One that inhabiteth eternity!" This is one of those flourishes that go to make up the stereotyped sermon of the preacher of the New Christianity, but which show that the old conception of "god" has really passed away among intelligent men, and that all that is left is a set of forms of words and rites and ceremonies that are admittedly meaningless and incomprehensible to-day, but which form the shibboleth and ritual that mark your adhesion to "our" cult. And Canon Glazebrook is right in thinking that the only way to maintain the dominance of the Church is to drive this incomprehensible rubbish into the heads of the children at a time when they can be made to believe that it is both true and useful.



"CONDITIONAL IMMORTALITY."

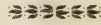
Rev. Davis, of the "A. C. Church," Toronto, in speaking on this subject on Jan. 10, said that the term was "one of practical value. It enabled us to understand the teaching of Scripture, and it illuminated the second coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and the general judgment." There is no doubt that Mr. Davis understands the subject, for his idea fits in admirably with the Dean of Westminster's—that the sceptic will be "strangely endowed with immortality, in order to be able to suffer eternal pain"! The wicked, that is, will be immortal—for a purpose; the good—well, they are immortal anyway. Then, how clear it makes the second coming! and the resurrection, and the general judgment! Like the bits of glass in a kaleidoscope, they fit together in some fashion every time you shake the toy, and produce some sort of a picture, which may be of practical value; and so these theological notions may have a practical value to some people, though what sort of value is not very apparent. If the words of Jesus may be believed, his first coming brought eternal life to believers (John 10:28, etc.), and we naturally conclude (1) that previously neither sheep nor goats were immortal, and (2) that subsequently only the sheep were immortal, the goats perishing. Like the kaleidoscopic picture, however—sometimes all red, sometimes all blue—the pictures drawn by Jesus are not more consistent than those drawn by Mr. Davis or the Dean of Westminster. For it is clear that, if the good have eternal life and the wicked eternal death, the resurrection and the judgment day, with all the paraphernalia of trumpets, scrolls, etc., are unnecessary. The wicked are dead, and there's an end of it. But how can they be eternally punished (Matt. 25:46) if they are dead? Clearly, if both bad and good are immortal, the promise of eternal life was deceptive; and the Dean of Westminster and Rev. Davis are trying to put a little logic, if not much sense, into the tangled skein of their master's teachings.

"TIME, SPACE, AND IMMORTALITY."

In our last issue we allowed Mr Hermann Wettstein to lambast the editor for his false ideas of "Space, Time, and Immortality;" and it may be as well—notwithstanding our own plea that discussion of these matters partakes somewhat of the nature of lunatic asylum gossip—to put in some sort of excuse for our mental lapses. It may be foolish to talk about "getting out of time into eternity"—copying the theologians. But, after all, the context of our reference to "eternity" would seem to indicate that, at the time we wrote it, we rather doubted, not so much the "out of the frying-pan into the fire" part of the business, as the reality of eternity or infinity at all. Mr. Wettstein, however, has so conclusively—as he says, so "mathematically"—demonstrated the fact of infinity, that we may be pardoned for wishing that we had not forgotten that we had heard something like his demonstration in our very young days. Yet, after all, what does Mr. Wettstein's "mathematical" demonstration amount to? Simply this, that to the human mind—the Wettstein mind especially—a *boundary* to space is *inconceivable*. This is the sum total of his proof. A story is told of a preacher who wished to enforce the same idea. "Suppose," he said, "a thousand million years to pass, and then a thousand million centuries, it would still be a billion millenniums to breakfast time!" This, indeed, simply exposes the fallacy of all attempts to correlate the finite with the infinite. What has breakfast time, or any finite idea, to do with eternity? Are time and space measurable? Are eternity and infinity measurable? Can we chop infinity into pieces? If time and space are measurable, can they form part of immeasurable infinity or eternity? Is it not clear that *time* is an essential factor in all physical and mental processes? If, indeed, cause and effect were instantaneously related—if the Creation story, "God spoke, and it was so," represented the work of omniscience and omnipotence—time would be eliminated. The final effect would be synchronous with the first cause, and we should have only the tired washerwoman's ideal of heaven—"to do nothing for ever and ever."

Mr. Wettstein may object that, after all, the standards by which we try to measure time and space are arbitrary, deceptive and illusory; but this only evades the question, and also cuts both ways. What is measurable at all cannot be part of what is immeasurable; and as measurable time exists now, it is mathematically demonstrated that eternity is non-existent. It is a self-evident fallacy, too, that infinite space could ever be filled up or congested with spirits or any other bodies in "a definitely computable period;" and when Mr. Wettstein talks about "constant additions" being made in "all parts" of infinite space, he is indulging in the sort of gossip we have characterized in

a previous sentence. Infinite space could only be filled up in infinite time—which means always or never. “Constant additions to an already infinite universe” is an expression that sets one’s teeth on edge.



“OUR UNIVERSE.”

Mr. Wettstein challenges us to “name one scientist, not a Spiritualist,” etc. If we could name fifty it would not add to the weight of our argument, but Sir Robert Ball, the celebrated astronomer, in a lecture only a week or two ago, is reported to have said: “While *rejecting* the idea of an infinite universe, with an infinite number of suns—because then the firmament would be a blaze of light,” etc.; from which Mr. Wettstein will see that his idea of a mathematical demonstration of infinity is rejected, not endorsed, by perhaps the highest mathematical authority in Britain. In this connection, we have nothing to do with Prof. Wallace’s predilections for Spiritualism. If the evidence in favor of Spiritualism were in our opinion valid enough, we should unreservedly accept it; but it is rather unfortunate for Mr. Wettstein that he should have to ring in another prophet of Spiritualism, Sir William Crookes, to support his theory regarding atoms. If Spiritualistic profession discredits one authority, why not the other? We object to dogmatism in hypotheses regarding atoms, or in any matter where actual knowledge is so very limited. Our objection to Prof. Wallace’s views was, that while he began by limiting his argument to “our” universe—the universe of which our solar system forms a unit, and the shape of which Sir John Herschel described as being roughly like a flat ring split at one side—he based a lengthy argument upon the view that it was infinite. Reasoning from analogy, if our earth is ninety-three millions of miles from our sun, and if our sun’s distance from other suns in our stellar system varies from a few up to many thousands of light years, it may well be that the nearest stellar system outside of our own may be so distant as to be beyond the reach, not only of the human eye, but of any possible telescope. While, therefore, dreamers and speculators may indulge in talk about infinite universes and immortality, it seems extremely probable that practical philosophy will always have to content itself with finite ideas regarding our finite universe. The two extremes seem equally beyond human ken; and just now we hardly care to discuss the question whether matter is really not matter, but only force-units; or whether “*prosychedynamis*” is the “primal mind-energy” or not. We have heard so much on this subject from our Theosophical friends, that we are convinced Mr. Wettstein is not “in it” with them in regard to knowledge of the ultimate constitution of matter.

 CHRISTIANITY AND DOGMA.

—:O:—

In one of his frequent letters to the *New York Sun*, Goldwin Smith, whose recently-assumed attitude as Christian apologist we have already noted, gives his views, which practically coincide with those of the Christians who define their religion as comprising all that is good and moral in human life, while repudiating as unessential all its objectionable features, which are really those that are its chief characteristics, and which alone distinguish it from other religions. The editor of the *Sun* has replied so effectively to Goldwin Smith that we have concluded to insert his two editorials.

 DOES CHRISTIANITY FALL WITH DOGMA ?

—:O:—

BY GOLDWIN SMITH.

—:O:—

Editor New York Sun.

It seems to be assumed in some quarters that if ecclesiastical dogma departs nothing of Christianity will be left us. The edifice of ecclesiastical dogma is built on belief in the Incarnation and Atonement, which again depends on belief in the Fall of Man. Science has apparently disproved the Fall of Man, and proved that man, instead of falling, rose, by evolution, from lower organizations. The inference seems irresistible and fatal to dogmatic Christianity. But does this reduce Christianity to an ethical speculation, one of a number of the same kind?

The essence of Christianity as it came from the lips of the author, seems to be belief in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Trace the practical effect of this belief through the centuries, disengaging it as well as you can from ecclesiastical superfetations, from the effects of fellowship with evil powers of the world, from the crimes of the Papacy, and from the fanaticism of sects. Does it not appear wherever it has prevailed, under whatever form and in whatever circumstances, in all nations and in all states of life, to have produced in those who strove to live up to it excellence and beneficence of character, with spiritual happiness and inward assurance that it would be well for them in the sum of things? In that case may not Christianity fairly present itself as something more than an ethical speculation? May it not claim to rank in some degree as a right solution of the problem of humanity and a practical experiment which has not failed?

It is said that in this struggle of righteousness and mercy against the powers of injustice and violence suddenly unchained, those who have borne themselves best upon the side of that which Christians claim as Christian principle, have in many cases not been Christians. This is true, and it is true also that some Christian Churches have taken that which seems to be ethically the anti-Christian side. But have these men, in discarding Christian profession, discarded belief in that which is the essence of

Christianity? Have they renounced belief in the brotherhood of man? May it not be said that Comte's great Being of Humanity is Christ's brotherhood of man under another name? Belief in God may have been renounced, yet to consecrate belief in a brotherhood of man

THERE MUST SURELY BE SOME CONSECRATING POWER.

As an indication that Christianity cannot stand as a philosophy of the conduct of life without the support of dogma, you cite the extreme passages in the Gospel against carefulness for riches and the things of this world generally, observing that "so far from there being practical unanimity in accepting this philosophy of the conduct of life, there is practically unanimity in repudiating it." Beyond doubt the passages are in expression visionary. They are Oriental. They are the language, as those who have rejected supernaturalism believe, of a peasant reformer who spoke to the heart rather than to the philosophic mind, who had been bred in no school of philosophy and was untrained to the exact use of language. Beyond doubt their visionary character has told against their practical effect. But, after all, the gist of them is "keep your heart above wealth and devotion to its increase." Has not this been practised, without detriment to industry, by men even in the mart or on the Stock Exchange, and have they not found that self-approval and moral happiness were the invariable result?

It was rather surprising to hear a doubt expressed, as it was the other day, by a scientific man as to the effect of the progress of science on human happiness. As to the effect of scientific discovery on our material well-being and everything that directly depends on it, there can be no doubt whatever, though querulous old age may sometimes be found looking back wistfully to the restfulness of the days before the electric telegraph, the ocean greyhound and the automobile. Nor, if it is the effect of scientific discovery on our religious faith that is meant, can there be any doubt that knowledge of our nature and destiny, however unwelcome and lowering in itself, is better than ignorance and infinitely better than falsehood. Let science prove that man is merely a physical development of the ape or earthworm, and that with his present life all ends; we will accept the proof, though there may be little comfort in the materialist's exhortation to make the best of this life and look forward with complacency to our eternal sleep, the life perhaps being that of a galley-slave, while eternal sleep is a pleasant name for annihilation. But the conviction cannot be said to enhance the dignity or conduce to the happiness of man; apparently it will hardly conduce to morality, personal or social. Before accepting it we crave a full examination of all the phenomena, including those which do not seem as yet to have been clearly brought under the domain of physical science. Physical science itself is still advancing, and there may be Darwins after Darwin. Nor, we must be permitted to say, is the materialist more proof than the spiritualist against natural bias. When a materialist, in face apparently of his own consciousness and universal experience, denies the existence of human volition, we cannot help thinking that there is ground for reconsideration perhaps even of other portions of his case.

THE PROBLEM OF EXISTENCE.

BY EDITOR, NEW YORK "SUN."

"A YOUNG STUDENT NOT LONG OUT OF COLLEGE" sends us a well-reasoned essay, of which, he says, "the only logical conclusion is that there is a God, the Creator of all things, Himself transcending and governing all, and that through our spiritual natures we are related to this Supreme Being." "All else," he proceeds, "is open to doubt and discussion; and divergence of thought as to it is unavoidable, but so long as each thinks honestly and lives up to his views there is no harm done."

The steps by which our young friend reaches this conclusion are many and his essay is long. Long or short, it would not be worth while for us to print it. His argument, convincing as it is to himself, would not produce any general conviction, but would give rise to a controversy which, as we know from experience, would be long and bitter. Both his premises and his conclusions would be denied. They have been rejected for hundreds of years and never more decidedly, both by religious faith and religious infidelity, than now. The problem he would solve, and which he thinks he has solved, is really beyond the possibility of solution by the human intellect.

Modern science does not undertake to go to ultimate conclusions. It goes only so far as it can demonstrate facts on which, perhaps, to found hypothesis. It has nothing to do with the imaginary, and it is the antithesis of dogma; it is knowing, not believing.

The argument of our young friend, therefore, creditable as it is to him as a metaphysical construction, is not pertinent to the conflict between religion and science which he would settle. For example, he assumes a personal God, with "self-knowledge and self-determination." Science knows no such being, though it does not undertake to deny his existence. Even the "new theology" so fashionable now leaves him without the attribute of personality, as also it leaves Christianity without any definite supernatural basis.

The "unavoidable divergence of thought" of which our young friend speaks is a radical and essential difference that makes impossible any argument between the two sides. "It is so," "it is not so," is all it could come to, even if we gave up the whole space of *The Sun* to the disputants from now to the end of time. That is, it isn't worth pursuing.

Mr. Goldwin Smith, in a very able letter we print to-day, takes the ground that even if the edifice of dogmatic Christianity, or its dogmatic connection with a supernatural source, is destroyed, "the essence of Christianity as it came from the lips of the author" remains unimpaired, for that essence is "belief in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man." But are not both denied and rejected by the science of the present? Mr. Goldwin Smith himself seems to imply that he rejects the first, for he says that "belief in God may have been renounced," yet there remains "belief in the brotherhood of man." Is not "Comte's great Being of Humanity," he asks, "Christ's brotherhood of man under another name"? To Christian faith is not that very

comparison the extreme of infidelity, even blasphemy? Does it not reduce Jesus to the level of a modern philosopher, and Christianity to an "ethical speculation, one of a number of the same"? Moreover, when he speaks of precepts of Jesus as "visionary," of Oriental exaggeration, and as the expressions of a teacher "untrained to the exact use of language," does he not substantially admit our point by taking from their utterer the attribute of Divinity, and, consequently, from his philosophy the distinction of final authority?

Mr. Goldwin Smith's letter will be provocative of much thought, doubtless; but even he, the profound student in an honored age, cannot offer any more satisfactory solution of the great problem than does our young friend just out of college. When supernaturalism dependent on dogma is removed from Christianity, there remains a field for philosophic discussion and speculation open to every phase of thought, and into which all may enter for a race which can have no goal.

DIVINE RELIGION OR HUMAN PHILOSOPHY?

—:o:—

THIS letter is representative of many which have been provoked by the recent discussion of dogma and Christianity by Mr. Goldwin Smith and remarks on his positions made by *The Sun*:

"To the Editor of *The Sun*. SIR,—From time to time you note the great volume of earnest and thoughtful correspondence on the religious question and your inability to make room for it, even if it were desirable—which, of course, it is not.

"But what, after all, is the significance of the inquiry? What, to be sure, unless it indicates first and best of all a desire to be instructed as to a true foundation for a philosophy for the conduct of life?

"The appeal for help and light from these people has its pathetic side, too, for they are as sheep without a shepherd.

"They appeal to the press to lead in this discussion, as in everything else; but the press sides with the Princeton big guns and stands pat with those who assert in effect that one cannot deal square with the butcher, baker, etc., without first of all saying 'miracles.'

"The people ask for bread, *The Sun* gives them the stone of a discredited theology.

"Brooklyn, Jan. 10."

"C. B. C."

Because we recognize that at this time, as never before, there is a widespread disposition to discuss fundamental questions of religion, due to a re-examination of the whole subject in a new spirit of inquiry, we have given much space to the searchings of our correspondents. Their many letters, reaching us by every post, indicate that they are painfully and, as the writer above expresses their feeling, pathetically stumbling in the darkness in their quest for some sort of substitute for a lost religious faith.

When, therefore, we have said, and we now repeat, that without dogma pointing out for Christianity a supernatural and miraculous foundation it is deprived of its authority as a religion which settles finally the mystery of man's existence, people of whom our correspondent above is representative are left in something like despair, for they have

ceased to believe in dogma and miracle. They have given up the Incarnation and the Atonement, unless as metaphysical and somewhat meaningless abstractions. Miracles are relegated by them to the same category to which belong the mythologies antecedent to Christianity, and also the fetichism and the more developed superstitions of existing religions outside of Christianity.

What, then, are they to do for a religion? Mr. Goldwin Smith suggests that apart from all dogma, all miraculous and supernatural witness and authority, Christianity may be made sufficient to satisfy religious aspirations because of its distinction in proclaiming the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man; but do not other religions than Christianity lay claim to the authorship of the principle? Buddhism knows nothing of a personal and overruling God, but, as Max Müller tells us, "the idea of humanity," "of a sense of duty extending from the narrow limits of the house, the village and the country to the widest circle of mankind," "of sympathy and brotherhood toward all men," was "first pronounced by Buddhism." Modern science and modern philosophy, like Buddhism, know nothing of such a God, yet they demonstrate or teach the interdependence of humanity. Personality, they say, implies an incongruous and contradictory limitation.

That is, Mr. Goldwin Smith offers no lamp to guide the way out of the darkness. His substitute for dogma is a vague metaphysical conception. It is not God he and his school worship, but humanity. Experience has taught mankind that regard for the rights and interests of the whole is essential to individual well-being. It is a fruit of enlightenment and development in human society, and it finds its symbol in the manners of polite society, of which the essence is self-abnegation and self-effacement. It is, as St. Paul puts it, in honor preferring one another. That principle is not peculiar to Christianity, but was established in the intercourse of men long before, and is exemplified also in the life of other peoples than Christians, even among savages. Human society could not hold together without it—without some approach to observance of the principle of the brotherhood of man. Even among beasts there appears at least the shadow of it.

Our friend who writes the letter above thinks that while "the people ask for bread *The Sun* gives them the stone of a discredited theology," because it agrees with those who insist that Christianity is reduced to a disputable moral philosophy of purely human construction if it is left without a miraculous source. But how can it be otherwise? Our friend is impatient of "miracles," and so also are multitudes of other former Christian believers; but if you give up the supernaturalism proclaimed by dogma, are you not thrown back on the explanation of Christianity as an invention of the fallible human mind? That is all we have said.

It will be noted that the only part of Goldwin Smith's letter that has the appearance of a rational argument gives us a rehash of the Design Argument based upon a mere verbal construction. He insists that it is necessary, in

order to "consecrate" belief in a Brotherhood of Man, there must be some "consecrating power!" But who insists that any special consecration of a belief is necessary? Supposing it to be established as a scientific fact that not only mankind, but all the animal world, are united by blood relationship in one great tree of life, and supposing it to be also established as an axiom that the Brotherhood of Man is the best possible working basis for a practical system of ethics, what need is there for any consecration or the services of a consecrating power? What need has truth of consecration? It is the false that needs bolstering up with rites and ceremonies.

Mr. Smith's argument that Christianity is "a practical experiment which has not failed" is a monstrous *petitio principii*. The success of Christianity in redeeming the world is the very point which is disputed. That it has utterly failed is sufficiently proved by the very discussion in which Mr. Smith takes part. Had it succeeded, such a discussion would have been impossible.

THE MONTREAL *WITNESS* AND THE CHICAGO HOLOCAUST.

—:O:—
BY A. CORN, SR., STRATFORD.

No one, we are safe in saying, will ever accuse the Montreal *Witness* of being in any way opposed to the divine order of things, yet the *Witness*, notwithstanding its strong predilection in this line, feels impelled occasionally to view things in a common-sense light. Whether this is due to new light upon the subject, or to the fact that the paper is aware that it is writing for a more cultured clientage than it catered to forty years ago, we leave your readers and the public in general to form their own opinions. We quote what the *Witness* says under the caption "What Does It Mean?":

"Have the repeated calamities which from year to year mark the festive season a moral import? A city preacher, on the Sunday after the Chicago calamity, said that he had, since that event, been met more than once with the troubled inquiry why God should permit such things; if he is a loving father how could he take pleasure in such wholesale distress? and such questioning was doubtless general. There are no doubt those who see in it a rebuke for theatre-going, but it will only be that to those who regard that act as wrong. There was once a great theatre disaster at Quebec. The occasion was a panorama, a form of exhibition very common in those days, but which has sunk into disuse. Singularly enough, the lights which lighted up a magnificent picture of Belshazzar's feast and the handwriting on the wall were the cause of the fire which resulted in a jam in the doorways and the loss of many lives. Was that a similar portent? Our correspondent who rightly regards the absence of any recognition of the hand of God in the Chicago disaster does not so interpret that calamity, but he thinks that the sufferers will have an added pang in the thought that those they have lost were engaged in a worldly amusement. They certainly will, if they think it was wrong for them to send their children to such a show."

It will be interesting reading to those who have followed for many years the course of the Montreal *Witness*, which has always been and is still the mouthpiece of the Nazarene reformer, to know that that paper does not see in any way the handiwork of God in that awful calamity. Of course, the *Witness* has this proviso, though, "There are no doubt those who see in it a rebuke for theatre-going." But, of course, there is this added proviso, "It will only be that to those who regard that act as wrong." Now, to be reasonable and logical, was it a rebuke to theatre-going, or was it only a case wherein the proprietors of the theatre failed to comply with the most ordinary requirements of the law in not making proper provision for the public safety? Every city ordinance that this theatre should have complied with, it through sheer criminal negligence failed to obey, thus entailing an amount of misery not only upon friends of the unfortunates who lost their lives in this terrible calamity, but upon the other theatres who were better provided with avenues of escape, who had largely complied with the law, and which are now closed altogether. This entails serious financial losses, not only to the various theatres, but to actors, scene shifters, scenic painters, supers, bill posters, etc. The majority of theatrical people are never any too well provided with finances, and this closing of the theatres has if anything aggravated the misery, as these people find it very difficult to exist under the most favorable conditions. The newspapers suffer too, through their advertising columns, the lunch rooms are not patronized, while a recent report from Chicago says, "A funeral pall hangs over the city." The same accident might have happened in any of the churches of Chicago or Toronto, and then where would the great moral lesson be?

Still for small favors we are truly thankful, and we cannot refrain from congratulating the *Witness* on the new light it has obtained, wherein it confirms their correspondent "who rightly regards the absence of any recognition of the hand of God in the Chicago disaster." "The world do move," and the diffusion of common-sense views upon religion is becoming more general as the ages roll on. Thanks to the spread of education, secular education. Education makes the public think, and once you get the entire public mind in this channel, you may bid good-bye to the musty theology that has seen service so long, for the man or nation that thinks is regarded as the greatest enemy of the church.

The Education Committee of the Northumberland County Council have decided to give religious instruction in the public schools.

New York has 600,000 Jews, 1,200,000 Catholics, and 1,600,000 Protestants. 500,000 Protestants and 200,000 Catholics are said to belong to no church.

The Archdiocese of Chicago includes 1,000,000 Catholics. In Chicago city there are 157 Catholic churches, two having congregations respectively of 32,000 and 20,000.

British trade returns for December show an increase of \$20,745,000 in imports and over \$2,000,000 in exports. The year's total trade exceeded four and a half billions, an increase over the previous record of more than \$125,000,000.

MAD MURDOCK'S MIRROR.

NECESSITY THE MOTHER OF VIRTUE.

WE are in civic convulsions these days, in what Riddell, K.C., terms this "Fair City." The *Toronto Telegram* is much alarmed lest in the attempt to catch a highway robber of votes, we may miss catching some sneak thieves in the same line. Other papers in this town are afraid that the highway gentleman will be overlooked in the scramble to bag the thieves. That reminds us of a story of a bygone time. We were on a fishing expedition on a northern lake and camped hard by the shore. In the early morning we discovered a parent duck with her brood about her passing by on the water. We took boat and drove her far up a little bay, and, getting into the water, essayed to capture the brood, who were too young to fly. The mother flew and gave her warning cry, the brood kept in splendid formation and led us to where the water was shallow and with a mud bottom. We closed in and rushed; the enemy scattered and rushed. Our feet stirred up the mud, through which the young ducks, safe from view, passed to the lake and freedom. Yet we felt as sure, possibly surer, of catching those young ducks than do Curry, Riddell and Company of convicting the right parties or any parties connected with what is known as the Toronto Civic Scandal.

That it is a scandal we are not at all clear, for does not R. J. Fleming state that the matter complained of is, and has been, a common practice, and R. J. Fleming's morals should be of as high a grade as his other stock. It looks as though it were a foregone conclusion that, to win, a candidate must do something of the kind. As somebody must win it becomes a necessity. Being a necessity it becomes the common practice, and therefore a virtue. Q.E.D.

DIDN'T KNOW IT WAS LOADED.

The investigation now proceeding at the City Hall has proved to the fair-minded that instead of Alderman Woods being guilty of doing wrong, as some people have suggested, in the matter of the placing of the names on the list for Markham Place, he is entitled to our entire confidence in his innocence and honesty.

When he stated under oath, and that oath sealed, signed and delivered by a kiss, that in having the bogus names placed on the assessment list he did not know he was doing wrong, dare anyone doubt him? Carping persons may say that one who knew enough to act as a city alderman and controller, must have known that, in the matter of the bogus names, he did wrong. Softly, my hearers; he is only on trial in the matter of the voters' list; the other charge has never been seriously made, so that it may be dismissed. We are not alleging his fitness for office, but asserting his innocence. While Sam Thompson, and the McGuire, Fleming, Durrance, and all the rest, were denying having done things, here was Woods coming forward with his little hatchet in one hand and his loyalty to his friend in the other, and saying,

"YES, GENTLEMEN, I DONE IT!"

Here was a heroic action and self-sacrifice. What was the position? A certain man,

having large schemes brewing, requires the support of an alderman. To make rabbit stew the first act is, "ketch your rabbit." To get an alderman's vote you must first get your alderman. Without a sufficiency of votes the other fellow may elect his henchman—therefore we must get votes. The city needs us, but the city is ignorant and don't know it. In the interest of all we will secure the votes of some whom otherwise we would lose. It is thought out, it is done. What then? Not much for a while. Francis Woods, like his friend Robert John Fleming, was brought up with that cheerful and inspiring motto on the Sunday school walls before him :

.....
 : THOU GOD SEEST ME, :
 : :

so that he made it a rule never to enter his neighbor's orchard—till after dark.

It seems a nasty thing to have somebody looking through a knothole in the roof when you want to transact private business. We venture the remark that when "Wuds" put on that list of names there was an old hat covering that knothole. But when Alderman Dunn or somebody pulled that hat off the hole in the roof instantly "Wuds" knew that he had done wrong. So of the rest of them : they of the leech family who are daily prepared to suck in such valuables as come their way are not capable of knowing that any overt act of theirs is wrong—till it is found out !

THAT JERSEY HEIFER OF FLEMING'S

Is a notable beast, not in that it was sent down for trial to Francis Woods' place ; not because it was owned by a man who would promise anything to anybody if anything could be made out of it and as promptly deny it afterwards ; not because it was dun-colored, not because it was of Jersey stock. No ! the reason why generations yet unborn may look on the history of the period and see the Jersey cow as the great centrepiece and leading lady of the play, is that it was the only creature that has been named in connection with the investigation of the Toronto Civic Scandal on whom no suspicion might be cast, and that on that account may yet be canonized, "For of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

UNIVERSAL EMPLOYMENT AGENCY.

Agents wanted to sell shares in Mental Science Co., Limited. Best thing out, big pay. Shareholders last year received dividends of 400 per cent.

Foreman and six hands wanted at once : must understand laying on of hands and divine healing. Union shop. State lowest wages and where last employed.

Third year pastor wanted. Must be hustler and able to keep audience awake and free from yawns after seventhly. Piece work only, with bonus on work over one soul per week.

Fourth year Theosophist wanted to take charge of reincarnation department. Must be non-unionist. 10 hour shop. A full half-hour for dinner. Must give date and place of last death and burial and former name in full.

Palmist and chirographist wanted at once. Must be able to tell age and color of rabbit by its tracks. Give testimonials as to speed and accuracy. P.S.—Not of the rabbit.

Wanted immediately, parson, Methodist preferred. Must be shouter and well up in latest methods, to work on half saved souls. Stock on hand about 1400. Wages 50c. per hour, and two evenings per week allowed. Steady job if sober and industrious.

Address :—Universal Employment Agency, Mad Murdock, Manager.

Rubbish! you say; won't get any replies. Why not? Are not these forms of industry as much in need of help as any other? But the others don't need help so much as they need customers? Then what about the Manufacturers' Association, who want to import a few shiploads of girls to start their idle machines? Oh, I see, only common liars. Very good; that is, very bad.

OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES: A FABLE.

Half a mile down the road was placed a pile of boxes, each box containing the economic life of one man for a year. At the starting point were five men in readiness for the race.

The first was mentally and physically excellent.

The second was perfect physically, but deficient mentally.

The third was intellectually brilliant, but weak in body.

The fourth was below par in both mind and body.

The fifth had a good mind and body, but was intensely sympathetic.

All started at the same place and time. All had the same distance to go. All were to use the same track, reach the same goal and receive the same reward—food, clothing and shelter for a year. What greater equality of opportunity could be conceived of?

The race occurred. The third and fourth lagged behind. The fifth stayed back to help them along. The second ran on all fours because he thought he could go faster that way. The first reached the goal ahead of the rest, took all the boxes and possessed himself of the economic lives of the others.

When the four suggested that it would have been more in accordance with justice to have a handicap race, the first replied: "The trouble with you is that you have failed to carefully differentiate between equal division and access upon a basis of equality upon complying with like conditions." Then the four cursed the first for his great discovery.—A. E. W., in *Lucifer* No. 984.

But when they thought a little one of them said: "You have possessed yourself of that by which we must live and which was the common heritage of us all. You are fewest though you are first, and we do not recognize that title. You will please hand over to our tax department the full annual value of the opportunity of which you have deprived us."

Then the first cursed the four for their little discovery.

BOLTON HALL.

First Christian Science Child—What's going on over at your house?

Second C. S. Child—Mother has just demonstrated a new baby brother.

BLACKLISTING THE HABITUAL DRUNKARDS.

A year ago, in England, a police regulation went into force under which the name of anyone twice convicted of drunkenness was entered on a list, and saloon keepers were instructed not to serve such persons for three years. Photographs for identification were supplied to bar tenders, who were notified that a revocation of their license would be the result of an infraction of the rule. At the end of the year's trial the order has been rescinded. One provision, under which inebriates might be ordered into an inebriates' home, was disallowed by Lord Alverstone, and became a dead letter. Then the police found that the number listed far exceeded the power of any bar tender's memory, in one case 573 photographs having been furnished to one man. The inebriate, too, could evade the rule by going into another parish or borough, or by assuming a false moustache. It is noteworthy that of the total number proscribed, 61 per cent. were women.

TORONTO GAS COMPANY AND MUNICIPALIZATION.

The rapidly increasing business of the Toronto Gas Company necessitates their applying to the next Ontario Legislature for powers to increase their capital stock, and Mayor Urquhart proposes to make this the starting point for the municipalization of the business of supplying the city with gas. His plan is to ask the Legislature to permit the City of Toronto to supply the new capital required, and to permit the city also to acquire such other capital in the company as may be in the market in the future. The price of the Gas Company's \$100 shares has ranged during recent months between 180 and 207; as it pays 10 per cent., this means that the net interest amounts to about 8 per cent. on the outlay. As the city can borrow money at 3½ per cent., it is clear that in about 40 years the difference would wipe out the loan, and in the meantime the city would be able to secure such share in the management as would obviate the very needless and annoying disputes which for many years past have disgraced our civic relations with the gas company.

Roman Catholic monasteries and nunneries are becoming common in England, owing to the influx of the orders which are leaving France rather than comply with the law. An agitation is on foot to stop the further inrush of the jesuitical fraternities and sisterhoods.

Jeanne d'Arc is well on the road to canonization. The Pope has just issued a decree admitting her "heroic" character. The remaining stage before canonization is the proving of two miracles to have been wrought by her, and naturally there will be no difficulty about this.

The Toronto Board of Education has had a scrap over the question of opening its meetings with prayer. The chairman, Mr. Gooderham, had removed the item from the "order of business" as it stood under the old Board, but at a subsequent meeting a motion was carried to have it replaced. The question now is, Who will read it?

A little girl had been very naughty, and her mother shut her up alone in her room and told her to pray to God and tell him the truth about her wickedness. At the end of an hour the mother went to her room and said, "Did you tell God how naughty you were?" To which the tot replied: "No, I didn't. If I told God, he'd tell Mrs. God, and it would go all over heaven!"

Parson Sollem—Don't you think, Mr. Henpecker, that in this your last hour you should think of the future? Are you not afraid of the King of Terrors?

Henpecker—Can't say I am, parson. I've lived nearly forty years with the Queen of Terrors, and the old man can't scare me."

Mark Twain was once at a dinner party at which the subject of heaven and hell was discussed at some length, but Mark sat silent. Suddenly, however, a lady turned to him and said, "Why do you not say something, Mr. Clemens? I want your opinion." With a perfectly grave face Twain replied: "You must excuse me, madam. I have friends in both places."

A Melvin man proposed marriage to one of the belles of that city the other day. Before accepting, she said: "George, I love you and would not deceive you in anything for the world. So I will tell you beforehand that I am a somnambulist." George looked puzzled for awhile, then remarked: "Well, that will be all right: I'll go with you to your church and you can go with me to mine."—Roberts (Ill.) *Herald*.

"This paper says that they have jest deescovered the reemains of a twenty foot saurian on th' banks of th' Penobscot river."

"What's a saurian?"

"I dunno. Guess mebby it's one o' them misprints for a sardine."

"There ain't no twenty foot sardines."

"Well, there might be the reemains of one."

"I don't believe it. Do you suppose anybody'd want to buy a box of sich sardines? I guess not."

"You're too dern critical. Ef there is th' reemains of any twenty foot sardines on th' Penobscot don't you suppose there might also be th' reemains of men big enuff to buy 'em by the box? You're a atheist, thet's what you are."—Cleveland *Plain Dealer*.

"Do you find him a little lower than the angels?"

A shadow swept over the fine face of the woman of property.

"I don't know. I never priced angels," she replied, after a moment's thought.—

Richard III. was offering his kingdom for a horse.

"How foolish!" they cried. "Why don't you get on Uncle Sam's payroll and you will have a carriage as well."

Regretting that he hadn't thought of grafting before, he had to do without.—N. Y. *Sun*.

A Hopkins girl, as a Christmas present, sent her photograph to her best fellow, wrapped up in a newspaper on which was printed an advertisement of a stove firm. A portion of the print adhered to the photograph, and the young man was very much startled to see staring him in the face in bold pica type the following words: "See name on leg."—Hopkins (Mo.) *Journal*.

"My husband," complains the wife, "is so puritanical! He does not believe in theatres, card-playing, clubs, or any of the modern forms of amusement."

"Indeed?" murmurs the confidant. "But (soothingly) you should remember you took him for better or worse."

"I know; and I can't help thinking how much better it would be if he were worse."—*Judge*.

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